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The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign
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Honorary President: Lord Avebury; Honorary Treasurer: Tom Soper; Organising Secretary: Carmel Budiardjo

19 July 1988

Mr George Iacavou,
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Dem. Severis Avenue,
Government House, 18/19
Nicosia

Dear Mr Iacavou,

We are writing to you to express our grave concern at efforts currently being made by Indonesia to become the next president of the Non-Aligned Movement. We are conscious of the intense lobbying by Jakarta to convince the forthcoming meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Movement in September in Nicosia to choose Jakarta as the venue of the next Summit Conference of the Movement. Such a decision would give Indonesia the leadership of the Movement for the next three years.

The September meeting is taking place at a time when efforts to defend the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination are reaching a critical point. We feel sure that your Government is well aware of this, knowing that the Government of Cyprus has always voted in favour of East Timor's right to self-determination at the UN General Assembly. We know that for your people, the pain of occupation by a foreign power is very real indeed.

Indonesia can rightly claim to have been one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement. It has however forfeited the right to any position of leadership in the Movement by its flagrant violation of the right to self-determination not only in East Timor but in West Papua. The people of both these countries now live under a harsh military occupation, with human rights violations a permament feature of their everyday life. Both peoples have seen their right to self-determination flagrantly violated, yet this is a right that has been fundamental to the Non-Aligned Movement ever since its inception.

Particularly in the case of East Timor, the stance of the Non-Aligned Movement is very important at this time. In November 1982, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 37/30, calling upon the Secretary-General to enter into consultations "with all the parties directly concerned, with a view to exploring avenues for achieving a comprehensive settlement of the question". So far, negotiations have involved only Portugal, the country recognised by the UN as the administering power, and Indonesia, the country which annexed East Timor in violation of the UN Charter and of UN Resolution 1514. Indonesia stubbornly refuses to consider the basic right of the people of East Timor to self-determination, whereas Portugal is bound by Article 297

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of its Constitution to uphold that right for the East Timorese.

Previous attempts by Indonesia to become President of NAM have been frustrated, in part because a number of countries in the Movement have condemned Indonesia for its illegal occupation of East Timor. At present, international efforts are being greatly intensified, in support of East Timor's inalienable right as laid down by the United Nations. Earlier this year, Portugal gained the support of all members of the European Community to adopt a common position at the UN, one that would safeguard the political and social rights of the people of East Timor and bring about a solution that is acceptable to the people of that country.

It would be a serious setback for these efforts if Indonesia were to gain the presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement, enhancing its international reputation. It has become evident to us that Indonesia's bid to gain the presidency is indeed intended to strengthen its hand against growing international pressure for the recognition of East Timor's rights.

The Government of Cyprus, as host of the September meeting, can play a crucial role in upholding the just cause of the people of East Timor. We believe that Cyprus would not want to be associated in any way with a decision that would constitute such a setback to the rights of the people of East Timor who have suffered the indignities of illegal occupation for the past thirteen years. May we urge you therefore, as chairman of the Foreign Ministers meeting, not to support Indonesia's bid for the chairmanship and to take every opportunity, during the Conference, to make clear your Government's support for East Timor's right to self-determination.

Yours sincerely,

Carmel Budiardjo